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THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society

Berkeley, California

Number 8 September 1989

Volume 71

**SIAN KA'AN
QUINTANA ROO, MEXICO:****Where the Sky Was Born**

The Wildlife and World Biosphere Reserve status of Sian Ka'an, located in the northeastern part of the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, will be the subject of a slideshow and lecture by visiting ornithologist *Barbara MacKinnon de Montes* at our first meeting of the fall on **Monday** (yes, MONDAY), Sept. 11, 1989, in Berkeley. Actually, we will be previewing the talk which de Montes will be presenting later in the week at the National Audubon Society meeting in Tucson.

As a longtime resident of Cancun who moved to the area before it was developed as a major Mexican resort and as president of Amigos de Sian Ka'an, Barbara is singularly qualified to share her knowledge of this 1.3 million-acre reserve as well as to discuss its special significance in the World Biosphere Reserve network.

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ACTIVIST BOOTCAMP

From June 12 to 16 I became a part of the political process in Washington, D.C. Attending the tenth annual NAS Activist Bootcamp, I lobbied our senators and representatives to strengthen the Clean Air Act and to pass the American Heritage Trust bill, one that would appropriate more federal money for land acquisition for parks, open spaces, wildlife refuges. The experience was well worth it, providing me with much pertinent information, as well as personal contact with NAS staff in the Washington office and with my 19 fellow 'bootcampers,' who came from all over the country to represent the local chapters in our national capital.

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SEPTEMBER MEETING

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Sian Ka'an is Mayan for "where the sky was born". When GGAS's tour visited the reserve in February we were enchanted with the abundant bird life which we encountered in the tropical forest remaining there. More than 320 bird species occur including breeding colonies of woodstorks, ibises, spoonbills, flamingoes, jabirus, and 15 species of egret and heron. Over 1200 plant species occur, including about 200 which are still used for food, medicine and building materials by the 800 Mayans who live in the reserve. Many threatened vertebrates—tapir, manatee, jaguar, ocelot, puma, howler and spider monkeys, white-lipped peccary, and green, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles—are protected in and around the reserve's fresh, brackish and marine environments. Last, but not least, is the 70 mile long coral reef on the eastern boundary of the reserve which is the second longest barrier reef in the world. It happens also to be the greatest spiny lobster nursery grounds on the Atlantic Coast of Mexico.

The most challenging aspect of Sian Ka'an is not the preservation of unique habitats but the necessity of promoting suitable use of natural resources. Intensive farming, lobster fishing and coconut growing are currently the main activities. There is debate about developing the reserve's ecotourism potential.

Please join us for Barbara's wildlife slides and her discussion of the unique program at Sian Ka'an which seeks to understand its ecology and how its inhabitants may share this richness without destroying it.

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The meeting will be at the Northbrae Community Church, at 941 The Alameda, Berkeley, at 7:30 p.m. on not our usual Thursday, but on Monday, Sept. 11.

LINA JANE PRAIRIE

BIRDATHON '89

FINAL RESULTS

"We've only just begun. Next year will be bigger and better. The competition will be keener. We'll have more fun and we'll raise more money."

These were the sentiments shared by all those who participated in Birdathon '89. They have good reason to feel so. Not only did our ten teams—the Cheep Trills and the Gray Jays, to name a few—get out there to hell and back, to Pescadero Marsh and to Mines Road, not only did the winning team, the California Thrashers, spot a grand total of 176 species, not only did 175 people take part in this birding/fundraising event, but GGAS raised a grand total of \$5,566.46. We can stand proud for that, for contributing much-needed funds to NAS's Mono Lake Legal Defense Fund and to GGAS's various programs and projects. Special recognition must be given to the Not-so-Oldsquaws, which as a team raised the most money, \$1,389.05. Also, let's applaud the efforts of two individuals who did more than their share to raise money for our birdathon: Ann Parris and Dan Singer. These two fundraisers should inspire us all to double our efforts next year.

Congratulations to all the winners, i.e., to all who participated, for we are all winners in Birdathon '89.

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FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, September 9—Coastal San Francisco. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Ave. and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in the park, Lake Merced, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of migrants. Bring your lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Leader: Dan Murphy (564-0074). (✓)

Sunday, September 10—Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet in Inverness Park at the Knave of Hearts Bakery on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. We will concentrate on shorebird identification at Abbott's Lagoon and Limantour Estero. Bring scopes if you have them, lunch and liquids, and comfortable walking shoes. Leader: Lina Jane Prairie (549-3187). (✓)

Wednesday, September 13—Minitrip to Alameda south shore and surrounding areas. Meet at 9 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Dr. Bring lunch and scopes. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Sunday, September 17—Point Diablo, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Marin Co. Meet at 10 a.m. at the top of Bunker Hill, where we will watch for migrating hawks and landbirds until 2 p.m.

From San Francisco drive north across the Golden Gate Bridge and take Alexander Ave. exit. Turn left as if returning to San Francisco, drive under the freeway and bear to the right. Go up to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; continue past the intersection with a road coming up from Rodeo Valley to the large tunnels on the right. Park and walk up the trail to the left of the second tunnel. We will bird from

the observation point at the north end of the hilltop. Bring lunch and liquids. Sun screen, a hat, and a wind-breaker may be advisable. Co-leaders: Carter Faust (453-2899) and Herb Brandt (239-2711). (✓)

Sunday, September 24—Monterey Bay pelagic trip. See announcement on page 122 of this issue.

Sunday, September 24—Lands End, San Francisco. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Palace of the Legion of Honor parking lot (Lincoln Park). From Geary Blvd. go north (toward the bay) on 34th Ave. to the top of the hill (through the golf course) and park in the large circular lot to the east (right). We will walk about two miles. Leader: Alan Hopkins. (664-0983). (✓)

Sunday, October 1—Sunol Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Park Headquarters. Take I-680 south; exit at Calaveras Rd.; go left and follow the signs to Sunol Park (about five miles). Bring lunch. We should see some wintering residents and fall migrants common to the interior. Leader: Art Edwards (447-3720). \$ (✓)

Sunday, October 1—Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet in Inverness Park at the Knave of Hearts Bakery on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. We will concentrate on shorebird identification at Abbott's Lagoon and Limantour Estero. Bring scopes if you have them, lunch and liquids, and comfortable walking shoes. Leader: Lina Jane Prairie (549-3187). (✓)

Saturday, October 7—Monterey Bay pelagic trip. See announcement on page 122 of this issue.

Sunday, October 8—Beginners' trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Visitors' Center. From East Bay take I-80 (Nimitz Frwy) south to Rt 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Go west and take Newark Blvd./Ardenwood exit. Continue on Ardenwood

three quarters of a mile to Commerce Dr. and follow signs to Coyote Hills. From San Francisco take Hwy 101 south beyond Redwood City, cross the Dumbarton Bridge and exit on Paseo Pardre Pkwy.; go north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow signs to Coyote Hills. Bring lunch and liquids, and binoculars and field guides if you have them. This is a unique park with fresh water habitat. Leader: Gene Hull (525-6893). \$ (✓)

Wednesday, October 11—Mini-trip to East Bay Shoreline. Meet at 9:15 a.m. From Hwy. 80 in Emeryville take Powell St. exit and go west. Meet at the north end of the parking lot at the Holiday Inn. We will be looking for shorebirds of the area. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (524-2399).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

A RARE OPPORTUNITY

GGAS has been invited to help institute a field trip program for San Francisco's Candlestick Park State Recreation Area. This is a rare opportunity to help establish a new State Park program, a chance to educate many people as to the wildlife and birding values to be found at Candlestick and to generate more support for preserving the natural resources at this park.

WE NEED FIELD TRIP LEADERS. The birding is not difficult. Birders of medium expertise will be more than adequate for conducting these trips. The

trips will, for the most part, be for beginning birders. If you know Candlestick, and have always wanted to try your hand at leading a field trip, please give us a call at 843-2222. We will be holding these trips from the Fall through the Spring.

OBSERVATIONS

May 23 through July 11

A spot check of the global situation ("A weekly diary of the planet," July 8, *S.F. Chronicle*), revealed floods in China, India, central Europe, and the United States; wildfires in eastern Russia and the United States; earthquakes in Japan, New Zealand, the Aleutian Islands and Utah; desertification in Haiti, and much more throughout the world. Massive destruction of habitat and global catastrophes are sure to affect species and numbers locally; therefore your reports of rarities and monitoring of local breeding populations continue to be extremely important. Although information received does not always appear in this column, it is stored in a database, shared with *American Birds*, and available to researchers.

Closer to home, summer weather patterns seemed typical, with coastal clouds and fog broken by occasional hot spells. A significant land bird wave occurred June 3–6. All SE Farallon Island information is courtesy of Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO).

Waterbirds

A PRBO biologist on a National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research vessel, doing transects 2–40 miles off the coast from Bodega Bay south to Monterey Bay, reported the following species (among many observations): one Wilson's Storm-Petrel June 10, one Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel June 12 (1 mile NNE of North Farallon Island),

and three Leach's Storm-Petrels June 6–10; a South Polar Skua June 3, one Sabine's Gull June 3 (Cordell Bank), and twenty-six Sabine's Gulls June 4 (Pioneer Seamount area); about twenty-five Xantus' Murrelets, most at least twenty miles out, June 10–11, a breeding plumaged **Parakeet Auklet** June 6 (11.7 miles WSW of Ano Nuevo), and a total of twenty-one Horned Puffins May 31–June 11 (PP).

A female **Magnificent Frigatebird** was seen soaring with hang gliders over Wadell Creek mouth June 24 (GJS, fide MLR, fide RSTh).

A hybrid Snowy Egret/Little Blue Heron was feeding at the north end of Charleston Slough July 1 (PJM).

A Brant was at Crown Beach in Alameda June 10–12 (DD). A Blue-winged Teal at Bolinas Sewage Ponds June 18–July 9 was possibly breeding there (KH, ISa, MLR). A Northern Pintail nest found at Martinez Sewage Ponds June 22 (KGH) confirmed breeding in Contra Costa Co. A Canvasback in the Warm Springs Ponds, southern Alameda County, (LRF) was unseasonal. The Bolinas Lagoon male Harlequin Duck, carrying "lingering" to the extreme, was still present through July 9 (KH, AME). A Black Scoter at Hayward Regional Shoreline June 17 (RJR) was unusual for time and place.

Fall migrating shorebirds began arriving in early July. Unusual were 100–125 Red Knots at Hayward Regional Shoreline June 17–July 1 (RJR). A winter plumaged Red Phalarope was found with 500 Red-necked Phalaropes at Hayward Regional Shoreline July 1 (RJR, RCi).

In addition to the Sabine's Gulls found on the NOAA research vessel, three breeding plumaged Sabine's flying north were spotted from a pelagic boat thirty miles southwest of Pt. Reyes June 11 (JM). A **Royal Tern** was feeding with forty-two Elegant Terns at

Pajaro River mouth June 25 (PJM). Four late migrating Arctic Terns were in breeding plumage and heading north when discovered about thirty miles southwest of Pt. Reyes June 11 (JM). A Black Tern graced Abbott's Lagoon May 30 (KSW). A **Thick-billed Murre** was seen flying past Pt. Reyes Lighthouse June 28 (RS).

Landbirds

Two chimney Swifts reached Pt. Reyes: one at the Lighthouse May 30 and the other over the Fish Docks June 4 (both RS).

Two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were found at Pt. Reyes: one east of Nunes Ranch May 28 (LSi, MH), and the other between the Spaletta and Mendoza Ranches, Pt. Reyes, June 10 (MLR, ISa). A **Vermilion Flycatcher** was found at Andrew Molera State Park, June 14 (DEG, DR). This is a first county record for Monterey. A Cassin's Kingbird was along the east end of Del Puerto Canyon Road June 11 (PEG). Two to three Eastern Kingbirds reached outer Pt. Reyes June 3–4: two were at Nunes June 3–4 (CSp, RS, DSg, AME), and one was at Mendoza Schoolhouse June 4 (JM). Another Eastern Kingbird was blowing around Spaletta Ranch June 19 (RS).

Purple Martins were widely reported: nesting birds returned to their traditional freeway overpass in Old Sacramento and were noted June 25–July 2 (KLH, PAW, JO); up to fifteen were flying about Bolinas Lagoon in the evenings June 19–July 9 (KH); two at Five Brooks July 9 (AME) were in a known nesting place; and small numbers of migrants were noted from Sonoma to San Mateo Cos. early in the period (mob). Two Townsend's Solitaires (rare in spring) reached our coastal area: Pt. Reyes Lighthouse May 31 (RS), and SE Farallon June 5. A Brown Thrasher was photographed feeding on the lawn at the Fish Docks

June 9–11 (ABtt, DSg, AKr). A **Bendire's Thrasher** was found at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse June 11 (DSg). A Philadelphia Vireo reached SE Farallon June 6, and two Red-eyed Vireos were there June 6–8.

The following table of vagrant warblers lists 43 individual of 12 species in chronological order within species, except where grouped for locality. Spring vagrant totals are 45 individuals of 13 species.

Tennessee Warbler (total 7)

1 Pt. Reyes-Fish Docks	June 1	RS
1 S.F. Lincoln Park	June 1	ASH
5 SE Farallon	June 5–8	PRBO

Northern Parula (total 1)

1 Bolinas Lagoon	June 22	BMx, KH
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Chestnut-sided Warbler (total 2)

1 G.G. Park-North Lake	June 3–4	JCI, ISa
1 SE Farallon	June 12	PRBO

Magnolia Warbler (total 3)

1 S.F. Lincoln Park	June 4	ASH
2 SE Farallon	June 6–7; 12–14	PRBO

Blackburnian Warbler (total 1)

1 SE Farallon	June 12	PRBO
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Blackpoll Warbler (total 1)

1 Pt. Reyes-Drake's Beach	June 1	RS
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Black-and-white Warbler (total 3; 4 for spring)

1 Pt. Reyes-Mendoza	June 4	MCM
1 Fish Docks	June 4	JM
1 Gazos Creek Road	June 4	RSTh

American Redstart (total 6)

1 Pt. Reyes-Lighthouse	June 1	RS
1 Nunes Ranch	June 2–5	DWo, JM

1 Fish Docks

1 SE Farallon	June 4	PRBO
1 Tomales Bay SP	June 18	CLo, RMS

1 S.F. Lincoln Park	June 22	ASH
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Ovenbird (total 14)

9 SE Farallon	June 3–15	PRBO
1 S.F. Lincoln Park	June 4	DSg, DL

ASH

1 Pt. Reyes-Lighthouse	June 4	JM
1 Nunes Ranch	June 10–11	MLR, ISa, JM

1 Fish Docks	June 11–12	AKr, DSg, JM
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1 NOAA research vessel	June 11	PP
31 miles SW of Pt. Reyes Lighthouse (walking down ship's hallways, peering into staterooms)		

Northern Waterthrush (total 1)

1 G.G. Park-North Lake	June 2–4	ASH, SFB, ME
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Hooded Warbler (total 3)

1 SE Farallon	June 5	PRBO
1 Pt. Reyes-Fish Docks	June 12	JM, MLR
1 G.G. Park-Middle Lake	June 27	SMo

Canada Warbler (total 1)

1 SE Farallon	June 12	PRBO
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Three Summer Tanagers found the coast: one at SE Farallon June 4–5, another at Nunes Ranch June 5 (MBG), and a third at Lincoln Park in San Francisco June 22 (ASH). Ten Rose-breasted Grosbeaks migrated through our area, three at Pt. Reyes June 4–12 (JM, WG, MLR), up to three at Bodega Bay June 4–13 (DN, CN), and another four at SE Farallon June 5–15. Several Blue Grosbeaks were reported from Great Valley locations where they breed, but an adult male at New Willows, Pt. Reyes June 4 (JM) was surprising. Three male Indigo Buntings found the Fish Docks/New Willows area June 3–4 (SEF, DSg, JM). A female Indigo Bunting was at Mendoza Ranch June 4 (RS). Another Indigo Bunting was noted along Miwok Trail in Gerbode Valley the first two weeks in June (RHm), and SE Farallon had three June 6–10.

A singing male Brewer's Sparrow at the Fish Docks June 1 (RS); a Brewer's Sparrow seen at New Willows June 4 may have been the same bird (JM). One Vesper Sparrow reached SE Farallon June 6–7, and another was at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse June 11 (DSg).

A Great-tailed Grackle was found at a San Jose residence July 9–14 (BBrr, BrBrr). A Northern Oriole of the "Baltimore" persuasion visited SE Farallon June 6–12. Several Red Crossbills continued to be seen in San Francisco near the Legion of Honor June 22–July 3 (ASH, SCx).

Observers: Stephen F. Bailey, Brenda Barrett (BrBrr), Bruce Barrett

(BBrr), Anthony Battiste (ABtt), Joe Broyles, Rich Cimino (RCi), Josiah Clark (JCl), Scott Cox (SCx), Denise Defriese, Al M. Eisner, Mark Elliot, Leora R. Feeney, Shawneen E. Finnegan, Doug E. George, Wilma Ghiorso, Philip E. Gordon, Marguerite B. Gross, Kem L. Hainebach, Keith Hansen, Roger Harm (RHm), Melanie Hirsch, Alan S. Hopkins, Andy Kratter (AKr), Donna Lion, Cindy Lorantz (CLo), Bruce Maxwell (BMx), Peter J. Metropulos, Mark C. Miller, Joseph Morlan, Scott Morrical (SMo), Clyde Nelson, Dan Nelson, John Osner, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (thanks to George Wallace and Peter Pyle), Robert J. Richmond, Don Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, Ivan Samuels (ISa), Larry Silver (LSi), Dan Singer (DSg), Chris Spooner (CSp), Rich Stallcup, Robert M. Stewart, Gary J. Strachan, Ron S. Thorn (RSTh), Peter A. Willman, Katherine S. Wilson, Dennis Wolff.

Please report observations to Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 528-0288 or 524-5592.

—HELEN GREEN

Observations Editor
2001 Yolo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707

YOSEMITE AT RISK

Almost ten years ago, in 1980, the Yosemite National Park's General Management Plan was adopted. It was adopted after twelve years of extensive analysis and public involvement. It mandated a full and forceful commitment to reclaiming this priceless treasure, for all people, from the hazards of uncontained growth and overcrowding. Writers of the plan believed that by 1990, Yosemite's centennial, there would be a vast improvement in the quality of the visitor experience in the park.

Despite this mandate, few of the master plan elements have been fulfilled, overall implementation has been slow and negligent. In fact, Yosemite has become less an experience in nature and more city-like each year, as congestion continues to increase.

Major elements of the plan are:

- a 68% reduction in staff housing within park boundaries. In 1980 a total of 1510 employees lived in the park. The plan calls for 480, but 1500 still live within the park.
- A 17% reduction in lodge space to just over 15,000 overnight facilities in developed areas. No progress has been made.
- The plan also called for "immediate steps" to reduce and eventually remove the personal auto from Yosemite Valley. Currently, on any given day in peak season up to 20,000 vehicles occupy the 30 miles of road in the 1×6 mile valley.

Most recently the Park's concessionaire, The Curry Co., a subsidiary of MCA, proposed building permanent dormitories in the Valley for 490 employees at a cost of \$10 million to the taxpayer. This is in direct defiance of the management plan.

The next few years for Yosemite are crucial. The action, presently under review, signifies outright disregard for the plan and it would set a precedent for continuing to undermine its enforcement.

You can address letters of protest to:

Western Regional Director of National Parks
Stan Albright
450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063

and to:

Yosemite Park Superintendent
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

For more information call Yosemite Action, Lesley Estes, 474-2828.

BACK YARD BIRDER

When in doubt, all birders, beginners as well as experienced, will fall back on a special category: LBBs (Little Brown Birds). A common characteristic of LBBs is their ability to dive into shrubs and trees or to hop into brush and tall grass before you've had a chance to see any identifying marks. I'm talking song birds here. No need to muddy the water with owls, shore birds, gallinaceous birds or raptors. We won't worry about warblers either since ordinarily no brownish ones occur in our area.

Knowing a bird's habitat and its characteristic behavior is the way to safely guess just which LBB we are attempting to identify. Using these clues it is possible to make an educated guess. Is it a wren type, a sparrow type or a finch type?

A member of the babbler family, the Wrentit of California and the west coast is more often heard than seen. Its bouncing ping-pong ball song echoes from the chapparal where it skulks in low bushes. It can be coaxed out with pishing sounds and you will see it holds its long tail cocked high like a wren, and its iris is white. The Bewick's Wren will hop about in similar habitat, "talking" all the while. With practice, you can learn to distinguish its buzzy sounds from the Wrentit's scolding notes. If you do spot the wren it will have a prominent white eye stripe and a "checkerboard" tail. Both are here year round. The House Wren, on the other hand, is a summer resident. It is very plain but has an exuberant song. The Winter Wren is also very plain but smaller with a very short, stubby tail. It is found along streams near the coast all year. Other wrens are easier to identify because they are found in habitat

for which they are named: Marsh, Rock and Canyon.

The most common LBBs are in the sparrow family, almost as difficult as gulls to separate. The Song Sparrow is easy (as is the M (medium) BB, the Fox Sparrow). Its white underparts are streaked and converge in a dark spot in the middle of its breast. Its ebullient song is belted out from the midst of a thicket. As it disappears from view, you might see that it pumps its tail as it flies. It might be confused with the Savannah Sparrow, but this bird prefers salt marshes and not thickets. Its markings are similar but paler, and a good look with field glasses will show a narrow whitish line through the middle of the crown and yellow lores, plus a buffy line over the eye. The Lincoln's Sparrow is also similar. Because it has a shorter tail, it has a daintier, trimmer appearance than the Song Sparrow. It is found along weedy borders where it is ever-alert, ready to dive into the weeds at any alarm. It is mainly a winter visitor. The other sparrows are quite easy to identify (be careful of immatures, however) and are easier to glimpse: Golden-crowned, White-crowned and White-throated.

There are three sparrows which have rusty heads, but which can be easily separated. The Rufous-crowned and the Chipping Sparrow are similar but the latter is only a summer visitor and has white wing bars to distinguish it. The Lark Sparrow has a prominently striped head—rust and white—and it has a white-cornered tail.

Three female finches are much alike: Cassin's, Purple, and House. It is a test of patience to identify them without a male counterpart with the female. The House Finch has a squared off tail while the others are notched. Of the other two, the female Purple Finch has a

much more distinct facial pattern, less blurred than the Cassin's. Pine Siskins are also LBBs but they have prominent streaking and show yellow flight feathers and yellow at the base of the tail. They fly in flocks of their own kind and among goldfinches.

You may or may not be inclined to try to sort out the LBBs. In any case, happy birding!

—MEG PAULETICH

FUTURE EVENTS

Suggestions come pouring forth from board members and here is an especially good one. We will try to print a calendar of dates some months in advance of events and certain field trips, especially those over week-ends, so that members can better plan. And also, we need to remind you of regularly occurring meetings and trips. For example, the second Wednesday of most months has a local field trip led by Anna Wilcox and Jean-Marie Spoelman (the 'Wednesday group').

Our general membership meetings are always (except this month) the second Thursday evening of the month alternating between Berkeley and San Francisco. The fall schedule will be Sept. 11 (exception) and Nov. 9 in Berkeley with Oct. 12 in San Francisco

The East Bay Conservation Committee meets the second Monday evening of most months at the GGAS office and the San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Monday at various locations. Call the office for information.

Board of Directors meetings are the last Monday evening of most months at the GGAS office and are open to members.

SEPTEMBER

11	General Mtg.—Berkeley
14	Wednesday Group

17	Rountree Reception— Oakland Museum
24	Monterey Bay Pelagic Trip
30	Bird Seed Sale
OCTOBER	
7	Monterey Bay Pelagic Trip
8	Coyote Hills Trip—Gene Hull
12.	General Mtg.—San Francisco
NOVEMBER	
9	General Mtg.—Berkeley
23	Thanksgiving Hike
25-26	Gray Lodge—Sacramento Wildlife Refuge—Pete White
DECEMBER	
17	Oakland Christmas Bird Count

FOR BIRDERS: OAKLAND MUSEUM

The Natural Sciences Department and Guild is providing enthusiastic birders with several delightful programs this fall. First, is the Gallery showing of Tom Rountree's shorebird photographs. Many of our members are already familiar with his intimate portrayal of local shorebirds from the November 1987 *AUDUBON* magazine and our own meetings. You are invited to join the opening reception on Sunday afternoon, September 17, from 3 to 5 to meet the photographer and view his work close-up.

Then, as part of the Natural Sciences Guild's noon lecture series, on Thursday, October 19 at noon in the Lecture Hall, Jules Evens of Point Reyes Bird Observatory will speak on some aspect of Bay area birds. Call the Museum for more information, 273-3884.

SEPTEMBER MEETING REMINDER

The meeting date is Monday rather than Thursday for the first meeting of the fall season. It will be something special. See page 113.

FALL BIRDING CLASSES SAN FRANCISCO

Evening bird classes taught by *Joe Morlan* will be starting Sept. 5, 6 and 7. All classes will meet 7-9:30 p.m. in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

The instructor is co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and compiler of the recorded "Northern California Rare Bird Alert" sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all classes and the text for all classes is *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* by the National Geographic Society.

Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesday. It is an introduction to birds and birding combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology and behavior. Part A starts Sept. 5 and ends Oct. 24. Part B starts Oct. 31 and ends Dec. 12.

Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays. it is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American birds, including terns, alcids and vultures. Part A starts Sept. 6 and ends Oct. 25. Part B starts Nov. 1 and ends Dec. 20.

Field Ornithology III meets on Thursdays, It is a continuing study of landbirds including warblers and sparrows. part A starts Sept. 7 and ends Oct. 26. part B starts Nov. 2 and ends Dec. 21.

These classes are endorsed by GGAS. Optional field trips on weekends may be arranged by the instructor. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them.

Fees are \$45 for Part A (8 week) courses and \$40 for Part B (7 week) courses. Students need not take Part A to enroll in Part B classes. Pre-

registration is recommended. For information call the San Francisco Community College, Community Services Office at 776-8247.

BIRD CLASSES IN ALBANY

We are very pleased to announce that once again *Albany Adult school* will be offering introductory ornithology classes beginning the week of September 11. On Thursday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. a class entitled, "Introduction to Birdwatching" will be taught by **David Schurr** in Room 7 at MacGregor School. And on Thursday evenings, beginning at 7 p.m., **Rusty Scalf** will teach 'Birds of the Bay Area" in Room 102 at Albany High School. Both classes include field trips, so schedules may vary after the first class. Call the Albany Adult School office, 526-6811, for further information.

MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC TRIPS

The Golden Gate Audubon Society will sponsor boat trips on Sunday, September 24, and Saturday, October 7 on Monterey Bay to view seabirds and marine mammals. We plan a 7:30 a.m. departure from Monterey Harbor. Past trips have produced sightings of albatross, shearwaters, jaegers, alcids, dolphin, whales and other species not usually seen from land.

Reservations may be made by sending \$25 per person to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1250 Addison Street, 107B, Berkeley, CA 94702. Make checks payable to GGAS and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Details on where and when to meet will be mailed with confirmation notices. For more information, call 843-2222.

BOOTCAMP (*continued from p. 113*)

Feeling as though I were back in graduate school, I attended numerous, exhausting workshops and seminars on far-ranging topics from the Platte River to wetlands to the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. Even in the evenings during dinner we listened to such speakers as Congressman Bruce Vento and representatives from other environmental groups. Not only that, but I had actual hands-on experience in the political arena by attending a press conference, meeting with an EPA official, and even having a working lunch with an attorney who represents the Canadian government on the acid-rain issue. Talk about being in the swim of things!

After all this, I faced the real business at hand, the actual lobbying, with some trepidation. There was much to contend with: the sheer mass of facts and figures, the intimidating office protocol, not to mention the endless miles of marble corridors and the famous Washington humidity. Well, what to do but just do it! Amazingly enough, the lobbying turned out to be fairly easy, even enjoyable. Lobbying is all about meeting people, making personal contact, showing that you care enough about an issue to come to Washington (or Sacramento for that matter) to discuss it and try to convince others. In fact, I would encourage all GGAS members, all of us who care about protecting wetlands, or mountain lions, or the Arctic Wildlife Refuge, to try our hand at lobbying. Just by being there in your government representative's office, by making yourself known as a person who wants to change the laws to protect our environment, you can make a difference. I did, and the experience has made a difference in my outlook as a citizen of this nation. Not only did I learn a vast amount, not only did I meet other people committed to the environmental movement, but I

found the true seat of power in our government, in myself as U.S. citizen, voter, taxpayer.

—TOM WHITE, President

**NEWS FROM THE RANCH
COMINGS AND GOINGS**

Another accolade comes to Ranch General Manager Skip Schwartz from our friends at Point Reyes Bird Observatory. They awarded Skip their annual "Significant Friend Award". Great going, Skip.

Congratulations and welcome to Felicia Guest, our new Administrative Coordinator at the Bouverie Audubon Preserve. She is a BAP docent and replaces Susan De Terra who resigned recently.

Thanks so much to Shirley Bogardus, Susie Coleman, Norma Liner, Cia Donahue, Jane Ferguson, Marty Griffin, Peg Haugner, Anne Hoopes, Jeanne Price, Corinne Ryan, Ernie Smith and Clerin Zumwalt for their great work in organizing and putting together, our annual donor recognition event. Saying thank you is so important, and with the help of people like this, that very difficult task is made much easier for the rest of us.

RANCH RESEARCH

Flora MacLise reports the research committee she chairs has undertaken to monitor natural developments on all of our major preserves and many of our smaller properties by establishing photo points. The idea is that an exact site is identified and a photo is taken from that point through the seasons and over the years. Thus eventually we will build a photographic record of natural developments on our land. Perhaps you should try it in your favorite park or in your yard.

Native grasses have been reintroduced at the Bolinas Preserve on one of the hillsides above Volunteer Canyon

and near Parson's Pond in Garden Club Canyon. This too is a very important project of the Research Committee.

Together with the ongoing marsh monitoring studies at Tomales Bay, actively rooting for the return of Tricolored Blackbirds to Livermore Marsh, this committee plays a vital role in the successful operation of all our sanctuaries and properties.

—DAN MURPHY

BARNYARD BIRDER

(Reprinted from the *Bodega Bay Navigator*. Nancy Conzett was sometime editor of *The GULL*.)

My horoscope for Wed. Apr. 26 read "This can be one of the nicest days of the month for you". Thus emotionally fortified, I hopped in the truck and went off to do some *Sonoma Co. Breeding Bird Atlas* surveying around the Broomfield area.

At about 11 a.m., shortly after arriving at the Meadow's dairy and shortly after viewing the ever-increasing Cliff Swallow colony in the hay barn there, I decided to walk uphill to where Harold Meadows had said he thought Grasshopper Sparrows nested.

I waived gaily to Harold's son, John, who was some distance away pushing manure around with a small tractor, and set off. Almost immediately I found myself stepping in mud and swearing quietly about not having changed into my rubber boots. Then, again almost immediately, I was in cow poop well over my shoes.

As I was trying to jump through that to something I thought looked like level (albeit wet) ground, I heard John shouting something I couldn't make out, although his tone indicated distinct concern.

Suddenly I plunged downward and was shoulder deep in one of the infamous cow excrement/water collection pools every dairy farm has. It was kind of the consistency of overly wet oatmeal,

quite green and extremely smelly. My binoculars were invisible, hanging by their slender leather strap around my neck down in the goo. My first thought was "I can't believe I've done this!" although perhaps more strongly phrased. Then I began to laugh like a hyena. I could think of a few people who would delight in seeing me take this bath.

John leaped off his tractor and came (carefully) on the run. He obviously considered my predicament much more serious than I did at the time. As he edged gingerly toward me, hand extended, he said "We lost a heifer in here once!"

As he hauled me out, I assured him that I was too old to die young.

Harold's wife, Lorraine, saw me dripping past the calf barn where she was working. Thinking I had slipped in the mud, she called "Looks like you'll need a change of clothes." Then she came closer and smelled me.

Harold took one look and said "Oh Gee!" He grabbed a hose and asked "Lorraine, which part of the garden do you want fertilized?"

Luckily, it was a fairly mild day, so the outdoor shower wasn't unduly rude, but the material I'd been immersed in filled every pocket of my sweatshirt and jeans, and my brand new Fisherman's Festival tee shirt had had a thorough indoctrination.

Lorraine showed me to the bathroom and put out fresh clothes. After scrubbing long and completely, I towelled off and got into them. The tee shirt she'd chosen for me read "Don't Worry, Be Happy!"

Afterward, we sat around the dining table at lunch and there were periodic gales of laughter, but there was also the sobering thought that if John hadn't seen me go in I could have been there a long time. There was NO way I could have climbed out on my own.

I phoned Betty Burridge, the coor-

dinator of the *Atlas*, that evening and told her my story. She said "Gee, Nancy...you don't have to throw yourself into the census like that. We just need a bit of data..."

Then I considered that if this was one of the nicest days of the month for me, perhaps I should simply take to my bed and stay there the remainder of April.

I didn't (although I reconsidered it when I locked myself out of my house on Thursday), but April seems to have come through the wash okay...

HOUSEHOLDER'S DILEMMA

The March/April *AUDUBON ACTIVIST* put my environmentalism to the test. What do you answer when routinely asked "paper or plastic" in the check-out line? Well, if you haven't produced your OWN assorted array of reuseable cloth bags, or at the very least, some of the old ones you brought home last week, you have mostly failed! Boy, the guilt of thinking about those stately trees being felled because I'm too lazy or embarrassed to bring my own bags.

The article says that when I resoundingly call out "paper," I'm using virgin paper, since most supermarket bags are not made from recycled stocks. And that papermaking as practiced today is not a clearly sustainable enterprise. What then, plastic? Heresy for many of us, but in truth, the wasteful use of paper can be considered more damaging to wildlife than some plastic substitutes. One caveat: if the plastic item to be used is near ocean coastlines and can be expected to enter the water, always choose paper.

Thoroughly discouraged and confused? The article's author, Jan Beyea, helps by ranking both paper and plastic products from best to worst:

PAPER

1. Normal bleached newsprint (average 25 percent recycled content): newspapers

2. Brown unbleached paper (average six percent recycled content): bags and brown wrappers

3. White bleached paper (average five percent recycled content): stationery, letterhead and most office paper. Coated stocks (usually less than five percent recycled): magazines, brochures.

PLASTIC

1. Polyethylene: thin plastic bags, coating on paper milk cartons.

2. High-density polyethylene: non-transparent containers (tubs for dairy products and jugs for bleach and chemicals).

3. PET: soft-drink bottles, boil-in bags.

4. Polystyrene: styrofoam cups, fast-food containers, packing materials.

5. PVC: transparent bottles containing oils.

We really can make a difference by making environmentally sound choices in our daily lives. A new 'precycle' campaign in Berkeley focuses on consumer awareness of unnecessary packaging of products, choosing the less damaging plastics, reusing containers (i.e. grocery bags). The next step is to let manufacturers know why you are making those choices. I also encourage reading the *ACTIVIST* for useful current information on how to help the environment and assuage the guilt! The GGAS office has reprints of Dr. Beyea's article.

—B.R.

CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH & AUCTION

Sunday, Sept. 24 at 10:30 a.m., Richardson Bay Audubon in Tiburon hosts its annual Benefit. Tickets: \$35 per person. Call 388-2524.

SEED & FEEDER SALE

IT'S HERE! Our first of the season bird seed sale. We will offer our usual fine quality seed selections, a new array of bird feeders, AND a variety of garden plants specifically chosen for hummingbird attraction.

The plants are provided by Karen Sullivan of HUMMINGBIRD GARDENS in La Honda, a nursery offering a wide variety of flowering perennials and shrubs attractive to hummingbirds. Many of her plants are California and Southwestern native species which are drought-tolerant and unusual. Fall is a great time to plant and this is a unique opportunity for our membership to see and discuss these plants with Karen as well as purchase them. While not all of the plants will be in bloom, she will have photos and information about all of them. If you should want a plant list in advance of the sale, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Hummingbird Gardens, P.O. Box 225, La Honda, CA 94020. Plants will probably be in one gallon size containers. We are very pleased to offer this opportunity as part of our sale!

The bird feeders available will include the standard 16" Droll Yankee cylinder with tray which we consider the easiest and most efficient of the seed feeders, two sizes of hummingbird feeders, large and smaller glass bottle shapes, and also a supply of wire cages for suet feeding. Suet is an important energy source for birds. We will also offer a gardenpole in three sections to drive into the ground to be used with the Droll Yankee. Our mesh thistle feeders have not proven reliable and we are hoping to offer a more sturdy version for thistle. If available they will be at the sale.

Our conservation activities are the recipient of your continued loyalty to our seed sales and assorted items. We are using a new supplier this fall which means further adjustment of prices, but the quality should remain the same and delivery more reliable.

We again urge you to order and prepay to guarantee the type and quantity of seed you desire. We plan to order extra quantities, but not in the 50 lb. size due to storage restrictions.

ORDERING INFORMATION

Please order and prepay by September 15. Orders will be available for pick-up in Berkeley and San Francisco. Confirmations of your order will be sent the week prior to the sale.

Send the order form (with tax calculated please), your check, and self-addressed stamped envelope to: Golden Gate Audubon Society, BIRD SEED, 1250 Addison Street, 107B, Berkeley, CA 94702.

PICK-UP SATURDAY, SEPT. 30.

A NEW BERKELEY SEED SALE LOCATION—our very own office, 1250 ADDISON STREET, right out in front, easy parking, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

The San Francisco location is 1414 Alabama St. in the Mission District between Army and 26th Sts., hours from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. This is Tom White's garage and his phone number is 821-6933 if you need directions.

BEDRIDDEN BIRDWATCHERS in rehab. long term care facility would prefer to watch birds instead of T.V. But our funds are low! We need donations of small seed feeders, wild bird seed and/or funds to purchase such, so that these older and disabled persons can continue some contact with nature. Also can use buddies to watch bird with! Call Gail Green at Medical Hill Rehab. Center in Oakland: 832-3222.

GGAS BIRD SEED AND FEEDER SALE

ORDER AND PREPAY BY SEPT. 15 / PICK UP ON SATURDAY, SEPT. 30

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Telephone (day) _____ (evening) _____

Berkeley San Francisco

SEED	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
GGAS' OWN PREMIUM MIX	20 lbs. \$ 9.50	
	50 lbs. \$19.00	
VOLKMAN WILD BIRD SEED	20lbs. \$ 9.00	
	50 lbs. \$17.00	
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED	10 lbs. \$12.00	
	50 lbs. \$25.00	
NIGER (THISTLE SEED)	5lbs. \$10.00	

FEEDERS

DROLL YANKEE 16"	\$25.00	
HUMMINGBIRD (large)	\$14.00	
HUMMINGBIRD (small)	\$12.00	
SUET CAGE	\$ 4.50	
FEEDER POLE (sectional)	\$13.50	

Be sure to include
your check with a
stamped and self-
addressed envelope.

SUB-TOTAL	
ADD TAX (7%)	
TOTAL	
CONTRIBUTION TO GGAS	
TOTAL	

GGAS' OWN PREMIUM MIX: Top quality specially blended for us to meet the needs of Bay Area birds. It contains only red and white millet and black oil sunflower seed. No waste seed. The presence of black oil sunflower seed attracts large numbers of desirable birds.

WESTERN WILD BIRD SEED: Mixed and packaged by Volkman, this mix is composed of only red and white millet—no sunflower seeds (no squirrels). It contains no low-cost fillers the birds will flick aside.

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED: It is high in oil content and nutritive value and appeals to chickadees and nuthatches, titmice, jays, finches and many other species. This is the best all-around seed for attracting the largest number of desirable birds.

NIGER (THISTLE SEED): Imported from India, this seed is 98% pure. it is a tiny seed, rich in oil, and is unappealing to larger birds and squirrels. It will not sprout in your yard. Needs a thistle feeder.



Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.

Office: 843-2222

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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.**

The Gull deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.